

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, CO 81401**

Decision Record

(DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2013-0014 EA)

Project Name: Tabeguache Creek Native Fish Barrier Removal Project

DECISION: It is my decision to mechanically dismantle the concrete dam diversion structure on Tabeguache Creek, and to remove the concrete from the site, as described in the Proposed Action of DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2013-0014 EA. Implementation can begin in the late winter of 2014, or in fall/winter of the following years.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

Design features are included in the proposed action to mitigate impacts to other resources:

1. For safety purposes, the construction area will be placarded to alert the public during equipment mobilization prior to and after structure removal. Dean Cooper with Montrose County Road & Bridge (252-7001) will be notified well in advance of project initiation.
2. To limit the potential introduction or spread of nonnative/invasive aquatic species or vegetation, all equipment to be used during the project will arrive clean and free of mud, dirt, oil, debris, and weed seeds prior to entry on the site.
3. The excavator will be stationed in the streambed while doing the deconstruction to reduce impacts to riparian vegetation.
4. To minimize the chance for chemical spills or leaks, fuel and lubricants will be secured in upland habitats away from the creek in a spill containment site.
5. All fueling activities will take place in uplands away from water.
6. A pre and post removal weed inventory will be completed. Any identified weeds will be treated as appropriate to limit invasion and spread.
7. Electrofish, collect, and relocate to nearby pools fish from the project foot-print just prior to initiation of work to eliminate potential impacts during structure removal.

8. Rip and reseed small areas of soil compaction using seed collected from native species on the site.

9. A survey for roosting Bald Eagle will be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to commencing any winter work at the project site. Should a roost site be detected then no work will commence until the individual/individuals have dispersed on their own accord. Work will then cease one hour prior to sunset to allow for subsequent reoccupation of the roost site.

10. BLM will consult with Colorado Parks and Wildlife prior to implementing the proposed action between December 1st and April 15th to ascertain current state of game species on winter ranges and current severity of winter, and mutually determine if work can proceed during the winter period.

11. A Nationwide Permit 27 for aquatic habitat restoration, establishment, and enhancement activities will be needed. Once this EA is completed a pre-construction notification package would be submitted to the Corps of Engineers for review.

MONITORING:

Implementation:

All work will be overseen and directed by BLM hydrology, riparian and fisheries staff.

Barrier Removal Site Response:

Following removal of the dam, the site will be visited during and after peak spring flow period to determine site stability and changes in channel morphology. Photo points and benchmark elevations will be used to help assess changes to the site. Recovery of disturbed areas will also be evaluated.

Fish Response:

A fish survey has been completed below and above the barrier to obtain population estimates of adult target fish species. Post removal sampling would be completed following dam removal in an attempt to determine changes in adult population abundance from above and below the site.

RATIONALE:

Removal of this concrete barrier will allow sensitive native fish to access upstream habitat in Tabeguache Creek. This will both enhance their habitat and contribute to the protection and restoration of populations of these native fish as described in the "Range-Wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail chub *Gila robusta*, Bluehead sucker *Catostomus discobolus*, and Flannelmouth sucker *Catostomus latipinnis*".

COMPLIANCE WITH MAJOR LAWS:

The decision is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policy, including the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and National Historic Preservation Act.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICAN IMPACT:

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was prepared, based on the information contained in the EA and my consideration of criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27). It is my determination that: 1) the implementation of the proposed action will not have significant environmental impacts; 2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan; and 3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public scoping was carried out by posting the proposed action on the Uncompahgre Field Office NEPA website. The project was posted on February 9, 2013. No comments were received.

APPEALS:


Within 30 days of receipt of this decision, you have the right of appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR 4.400. Appeal and stay procedures are outlined in Form CO-050-1842-1.

NAME OF PREPARER: Amanda Clements

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR:  Bruce Krickbaum

DATE 12-5-2013

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL


for Barbara Sharrow
Field Manager
Uncompahgre Field Office

DATE SIGNED Dec. 6, 2013